

THE CLOSURE.

HOW IT HAS BEEN USED WITH REFERENCE
TO HOME RULE AND WHY IT HAS
BEEN SO USED.

London, August 14.

Sir Henry James has found a rather neat illustration of the position of the House of Commons with reference to the Home Rule bill. The House, in his opinion, has never given its sanction to this measure. "Mr. Gladstone can no more say he has passed the bill through the House than a man could say he had passed an examination by knocking the examiner down." That is at least a variation upon gag and guillotine, terms which, though accurately descriptive of Mr. Gladstone's new Parliamentary methods, become, as everything becomes by repetition, monotonous. The good American Gladstonian must not, however, allege that either of them is offensive. "Gag" was first used by the Irish and the guillotine by the Radicals. The latter are Mr. Gladstone's faithful henchmen; for the present, and the Irish are his masters; apparently for all time since he has no hope of a majority hereafter—I mean in this world, not the next—without the Irish vote. There are those, who regard that fact as of itself a sufficient explanation of his change of front and broken pledges on the question of retaining the Irish at Westminster. Neither he nor the Radicals would be able to pass any of their Newcastle bills relating exclusively to Great Britain, without Irish help.

If the Unionists were alert they might do well to prepare a map of the Home Rule bill for popular use. "The Times" has done something to make it plain to the eye as well as to the mind by printing the text of the bill in two different sorts of type. Those portions of it which the House has been allowed to debate, or to discuss at all in committee, are in italic letter. The undiscussed portions are in roman. The page thus arranged makes the practical effect of closure visible to the eye. There is a broad desert of roman letter with straggling oases of italic. Count the lines and you find that nearly four-fifths of the bill has been passed in dumb show. In round numbers, out of 1,400 lines, of which the bill consists, rather less than 350 have been to some extent within the actual cognizance of the committee, and have been more or less fully considered. The remaining 1,050 or so have never been debated, nor has any opportunity or means of debating them been vouchsafed. What do you think of such legislation as that? But that is Mr. Gladstone's method of legislation.

What is the excuse? The necessity of passing the bill this session. What is the necessity? I know I have touched on this point before, but only touched on it, and I put the question again. Will some good American Gladstonian try to answer it to his own satisfaction? Will he say what he would think of an attempt to rush a constitutional amendment through Congress in this fashion? But a constitutional amendment deals with a single subject, consisting of a few lines, and is an amendment to nothing more. When it has passed Congress it has, as every American—not many Englishmen—knows, to go before the Legislatures or conventions of each separate State. It is, therefore, when presented to Congress, in the first place, simple, brief, easily understood by the people, and sometimes even by Congressmen; in the second place, it is subject to revision, since it is a simple amendment, and cannot become law till simple discussion, and cannot become law till simple discussion, on an average of recent instances, about fifteen months.

Whereas the Home Rule bill, so far from being a constitutional amendment, is admittedly a constitutional revolution. It creates a new Legislature and disturbs an old one; sets up a new executive, and a new judiciary; profoundly modifies the existing relations between Great Britain and that part of the Kingdom called Ireland; profoundly modifies the constitution of Great Britain as well as of Ireland; limits by devolution and without any sufficient safeguard for the exercise of the powers not expressly devolved, the powers of a Parliament hitherto Imperial and omnipotent; threatens the property and endangers in some cases the lives, and in all the liberties of a minority estimated at one-third of the whole Irish people; and does many other things of vast political magnitude, of far-reaching and at present immeasurable consequences. It is, in Mr. Gladstone's own phrase, twenty hills rolled into one.

Such is the extent of the contrast between the Home Rule bill and a constitutional amendment in the United States. If it takes the people of the United States, the most intelligent of nations with the best political training in the world, fifteen months to pass a constitutional amendment in five lines dealing with a single topic, how long ought it to take the electors of Great Britain, of whom nearly one-half ten years ago had not a vote, to pass a huge bill of 1,400 lines affecting the civil, personal, and political rights of Ireland, transforming and revolutionizing the political relations of the two sections of the whole Kingdom, and overthrowing that constitution of Parliament which has lasted for 600 years? What is the arithmetical proportion? What is the proportion of common sense, of common honesty, of a just regard for public interests and of a just estimate of the tremendous issues and responsibilities involved?

Will the good American Gladstonian answer that question to his satisfaction? And when he has answered it will he tell us how his answer compares with the hard facts, with the two months of Parliamentary time actually allowed the House of Commons to consider the Home Rule bill, and with the still harder fact that, with respect to all allowed, and no member suffered to open his mouth except to say yes or no? When he has worked out that sum will he then further apply his mind to the fact that, as against a subsequent reference of an amendment in America to eighty-eight separate legislative bodies, the reference of the Home Rule bill in England is to one legislative body, and to one only? Perhaps he will then think himself in a position to consider more intelligently the question of that alleged political necessity which I said the alleged excuse offered for the gag and the guillotine are at present worked by Mr. Gladstone. He will find the necessity to be not political, but party necessity, and not altogether party necessity, but largely personal; a necessity arising primarily out of the advanced age of its author; out of his determination that the bill shall be carried during his lifetime and by himself; and out of the natural probability that his life, or his efficient legislative activity, cannot be many years prolonged. The whole argument of political necessity might be summed up in the statement that Mr. Gladstone will be eighty-four next December.

What are called the wrongs of Ireland have endured 700 years. Would it be too much to give seven years or seven months to the redress of this vast accumulation of iniquities? They are to a great extent sentimental, as they spring from race feuds and from class hatreds and from the conflict of material interests. They are far more social than political, and therefore require far more cautious handling. Many of the real grievances have long since been redressed. There is not a people on the face of the globe for whom so much has been done by legislation as for the Irish tenants and Irish peasantry. What remains to be done may surely be done with deliberation.

It is idle to say that there has been deliberation, or that Home Rule has been discussed in and out of Parliament during the last seven years, to the exclusion of many other more important topics. No doubt it has, if by Home Rule you mean merely the principle or use of a separate Parliament at Dublin. But Home Rule in its concrete form is a very different matter, and, as we have seen, enormously complex, difficult, dangerous, and revolutionary. If Mr. Gladstone had chosen to proceed in the first place as he did in 1868 with reference to the Irish Church, by resolution, nobody would have complained. It would have been fair to ask Parliament to affirm the principle of Home Rule; then to announce the features and details of a

bill; to give the country time to consider them; then to pass a bill in the following year. But during all the seven years of agitation, no man knew what form of Home Rule was to be proposed, and Mr. Gladstone himself said everything depended on the form, on the framing of the bill, on making the scheme practical and workable.

Home Rule in that sense, in Mr. Gladstone's sense, dates from last February, and since last February he has turned his bill inside out, and on at least two of the most vital points, finance and Irish representation, has made it a new bill. Can any political necessity for railroadizing a great measure arise on such a state of affairs as that? Everybody knows the precise facts as to that. Everybody knows the precise facts as to the English people, the desire to pass not only Home Rule, for which the majority do not care, but certain measures of reform for which powerful sections of the electorate do care, and to go to the country on these last and not on Home Rule—those are the real political necessities for the sake of which the liberties of Parliament have been sacrificed, and the interests of the Empire imperilled.

G. W. S.

THE ATTACK ON M. LOCKROY.

STORY OF THE CABMAN-POET MOORE, WHO FIRED AT HIM.

Paris, August 15.

M. Edward Lockroy, at whom the cabman-poet Moore fired last Sunday, is the most deservingly popular man in Paris. He has talent, charm of manner and amiability. His wife is gracious of a social defect; they only keep those appointments which it suits them to keep, and when they neglect them do not apologize. One therefore never knows on what terms one should consider one's self standing in relation to them. The cabman's great grievance was Lockroy having broken an appointment, which, it is true, he made with him in the hurry of an electoral campaign. Moore was to have gone to the beautiful villa in which M. and Mme. Lockroy moved after Victor Hugo's death. It is a short distance from the house in which he died, and in the same avenue which was called after him in his lifetime. The cabby knocked at the hall in the hour agreed upon, and the servant told him that M. Lockroy was asleep and must not be disturbed. He then went over the way to a public house and asked the publican to get the windows of the villa watched and to let him know directly M. Lockroy was sighted. At the end of four hours this happened. Moore, crossing the avenue, knocked again, and was informed that M. Lockroy was not at home. The public house was again visited, and a third call was made at midnight. But there was no Lockroy to be seen. The cabman-poet wrote a letter, and then another and another, asking for an appointment. He explained that he was fifty-two, was weary of the box, would be glad of some small situation under the Government that would enable him to cultivate the muse of poetry, and thought that perhaps M. Lockroy, in prize of whom he had at public meetings read the electoral district that Deputy represents read the electoral district that Deputy represents many poems, might help him. Said Moore to himself: "He has no manner, and needs a lesson." It is to be feared the cabman was as much under the inspiration of liquor as of the muse when to give that lesson he went and bought a revolver.

The first time he used it was last Sunday. Lockroy was going into the house where his committee meets. A man asked him for 5 francs. He said: "I have no change, but come upstairs and then I shall see what I can do." Hastening on he heard at the foot of the stairs a trigger click as though it had been drawn at half cock. He turned round and saw Moore holding a revolver and with his finger on the trigger. "Take your money and go about," cried Lockroy. "It's very dangerous to play with firearms." "Don't be afraid," was the answer. "It's not on half cock." Lockroy feeling nervous, faced round full and his chest met the muzzle. The pistol this time was fired. The ball hit Lockroy on the sixth rib. He exclaimed, "I'm assassinated," and fainted. But the tissues were not wounded, though contused. The bullet was flattened. It was denuded by a stuffy starched waistcoat and a leather card case in the pocket. The ecchymosis was in exactly the same spot over the heart as the one on the breast of Jules Ferry after he had been fired at seven years ago in the lobby of the Palais Bourbon.

Lockroy is a son-in-law of Victor Hugo, and the son of a once popular actor, Simon, who took the name in going on the stage, on which the Deputy of the 15th District of Paris has cast some lustre, both as a writer and a speaker. This accomplished Frenchman was born at Turin, and is of the Hebrew race, which one sees chiefly in his large and prominent eyes. His figure is slight and almost attenuated, and proclaims him to be what he is, a bundle of impressionable nerves. On leaving college he joined the Thousand of Garibaldi, and went with that sublime avenger to Sicily. Mme. Cornu, the late Emperor's foster sister, got him appointed a member of the archaeological mission to Syria that Renan was to lead. Rosalie, Renan's sister, went out with them, and they buried her near Beyrouth, where she died of fever, and Renan was near dying. The philosopher and the young Garibaldi struck up a friendship which only ended with the death of the former.

Moore is a Savoyard, though the name looks English. He is a short, thick-set, ruddy person of fifty, with a bald head, bushy eyebrows and a nose which, and has long suffered from cerebral aneurism. Fifteen years ago he went slightly off his head, and made his cabbox serve as a retreat. He rhymed and ranted. At that time his craze was Humanity in conjunction with the Revolution. The mob found in him the stuff of a Tribune and delighted in his extravagance. He then became an orator at public meetings and strikes, but continued to drive the cab. Some nine or ten years ago Victor Hugo wanted to go to the Senate, of which he was a member. He could not find a traic with an empty seat. After waiting some time he called a cab and told the driver to take him to the Palace of the Senate. The cabby was Moore. He refused not merely the usual gratuity, but the price of the set down. The name of the cabby conveyed no impression upon him. He was a poet himself, and with the rest of Paris he worshipped the author of "Les Misérables" and of "Le Cloître". Being a name at home, Victor Hugo, not far from the place where he was to be, asked him to come to dinner. The first day Moore dined with him I was a guest. There were also in the dinner party M. and Mme. Grevy, Hugues, the one a poet deputy and painter, and the other a sculptor who since shot a police private inquiry agent for trying to blackmail her. Catulle Mendès and a few other worshippers of the Muse, had also been invited. Moore had the place of honor, and was presented by the host as "My colleague, and a greater poet than myself, inasmuch as he composed verses under far greater difficulties." This turned the cabman's head. He treated the company to his verses, which sometimes limped, talked of the conditions under which he wrote them, and told how it pleased his wife when he passed his leisure moments at home. 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